amicable solution to the Naga issues. While there has been an exchange of views and efforts to reach a mutually acceptable position, the talks remained inconclusive. It will not be in public interest to disclose the details at this stage.

Raipur-Rourkela Power Grid

*659. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Raipur-Rourkela Power Grid has become operational;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be commissioned; and

(c) how this would help Maharashtra to overcome its power crisis?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Raipur-Rourkela 400 kV D/C Transmission Link, which inter-connects 400 kV sub-station at Rourkela in Eastern Region and 400 kV sub-station at Raipur in Western Region, was charged on 31st January, 2003 and has been synchronized on 2nd March, 2003.

(c) This link has the capacity to transfer 1000 MW power from Eastern Region to Western Region and *vice-versa*. At present, about 500 MW additional surplus power in Eastern Region is being transferred to power deficit Western Region over this link, which can be utilized by the constituent State of the Western Region, including Maharashtra, to overcome their power shortage.

DDP in Rajasthan

*660. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) progress made in the implementation of Desert Development Programme in the State of Rajasthan during the last three years;

(b) the details of Budget allocated for this project for the years 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003;

(c) whether any targets were fixed for the implementation of this project; and

(d) the details of achievements made under the said programme?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) 1. The Desert Development Programme is being implemented in 85 Blocks of 16 Districts in the State of Rajasthan in accordance with the Guidelines for Watershed Development since 1995-96 with the objective of controlling desertification and improving ecomomic conditions of the resource poor population inhabiting the programme areas. Besides, in view of the typical

geography and regional factors of the hot arid (Sandy) region in the State, the Ministry of Rural Development have also sent sanctioning special projects under the Programme since 1999-2000, for sand dune stabilization, shelterbelt plantations etc. in 10 identified districts of Western Rajasthan.

2. Under Desert Development Programme (DDP), State-wise targets and allocation of funds are not made. The new projects (each watershed project generally covers 500 hectares) are sanctioned in accordance with the provisions of the Guidelines for Watershed Development and the funds are released in seven instalments over a project period of five years.

3. Since 1995-96, a total number of 3693 projects have been sanctioned under DDP for the programme areas of Rajasthan, out of which 1533 projects fall under the category of special projects. During the last three years, a total number of 1050 watershed projects and 919 special projects have been sanctioned and a sum of Rs. 24911.58 lakh has been released to the State. The year-wise break-up is as under :-

Year	Number of watershed projects sanctioned	Number of special projects sanctioned	Funds released (Rupees in Lakh) both for new and on-going projects
2000-2001	388	293	7853.78
2001-2002	245	264	8164.26
2002-2003	417	362	8893.54

4. The implementation of DDP Projects in Rajasthan is at various stages. Of the total 3693 sanctioned projects, entire project funds have been released in 841 projects. Another 880 projects are at advanced stages of implementation.

5. In order to assess the impact of the watershed development projects in Rajasthan, a study has been carried out in 302 sample projects. The impact assessment study reveals that due to implementation of these projects, the overall productivity of land and water table have increased and there has been a significant positive impact on overall economic development of the inhabitants in the project areas. The study indicates that green vegetative cover, irrigation and crop yield have improved in these areas.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Marketing and pricing policies of CIL subsidiaries

4797. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :